

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NODS-00

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NEA - MR. ATHERTON  
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TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE  
WHITE HOUSE

S E C R E T STATE 077944

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, XF, US

SUBJECT: BRIEFING FOR KING HUSSEIN AND THE SAUDIS ON THE  
PRESIDENT'S TALKS WITH BEGIN

1. FOLLOWING IS REPORT ON PRESIDENT'S TALKS WITH PRIME  
MINISTER BEGIN MARCH 21-22 WHICH SHOULD BE CONVEYED TO  
KING HUSSEIN AND TO PRINCE FAHD OR SAUD ON BEHALF OF THE  
SECRETARY.

2. THE VISIT SHOULD BE VIEWED IN RELATION TO WHERE WE  
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ARE IN THE PEACE PROCESS. FOLLOWING THE INITIAL MOMENTUM  
GENERATED BY THE JERUSALEM AND ISMAILIA SUMMITS, WHEN THE  
NEGOTIATIONS BEGAN TO GET DOWN TO THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL  
ISSUES PROGRESS SLOWED ACCORDINGLY. WE DISCUSSED THESE  
ISSUES WITH PRESIDENT SADAT IN FEBRUARY AND FOLLOWING  
FURTHER GROUNDWORK THROUGH ATHERTON'S TALKS IN THE AREA  
FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS THEM ALSO WITH PRIME

MINISTER BEGIN.

3. THE TALKS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER BEGIN DURING THIS VISIT WERE THE MOST PROBING AND DETAILED THEY EVER HAD. PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER MET FOR TWO HOURS MORNING MARCH 21 AND CONTINUED TALKS AT PRIVATE DINNER THAT EVENING AND ON MORNING MARCH 22. SECRETARY PURSUED DISCUSSIONS AT DINNER WITH DAYAN MARCH 21, AND IN MEETINGS AFTERNOONS MARCH 21 AND 22. THROUGHOUT THE VISIT THE PRESIDENT KEPT THE CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON THE CRITICAL ISSUES OF WITHDRAWAL AND THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION AND LEFT BEGIN IN NO DOUBT OF THE CRUCIAL DECISIONS ISRAEL MUST MAKE TO KEEP THE PEACE PROCESS GOING. BEGIN DID NOT GO BEYOND PRESENT POSITIONS NOR DID WE EXPECT HIM TO DURING THIS VISIT, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT HE WILL GO HOME DEEPLY AWARE THAT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT NOW FACES DECISIONS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED. THE PUBLIC HANDLING OF THE TALKS WAS SUCH THAT THE PUBLIC BOTH IN THE US AND IN ISRAEL KNOWS THAT THESE WERE DIFFICULT MEETINGS WHERE THE ISSUES WERE SQUARELY JOINED.

4. THE PRESIDENT FORCEFULLY STATED THE DEEP AMERICAN INTEREST IN AND COMMITMENT TO ACHIEVING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE EMPHASIZED HIS COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH THE PARTIES IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE TO  
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REMOVE OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE PRESIDENT STRESSED THE NEED FOR EARLY CONCLUSION OF A MEANINGFUL DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES WHICH MUST DEAL WITH THE WITHDRAWAL ISSUE AND THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION IN TERMS THAT WILL PROVIDE A CREDIBLE BASIS FOR BROADER NEGOTIATIONS.

5. CENTRAL FOCUS THROUGHOUT THE TWO DAYS OF CONVERSATION WAS ON THE NECESSITY FOR ISRAEL TO ACCEPT UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT ALL THE PRINCIPLES OF RESOLUTION 242, INCLUDING WITHDRAWAL, APPLY ON ALL FRONTS. THE PRESIDENT MADE CLEAR THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL, INCLUDING ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, IS ESSENTIAL TO PROGRESS IN THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. BEGIN ARGUED THAT NOTHING IN ISRAEL'S PEACE PROPOSALS IS INCONSISTENT WITH 242; THAT EVERYTHING IS NEGOTIABLE; AND THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO PRECONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS. WE POINTED OUT THAT THIS ISRAELI POSITION AVOIDS THE BASIC ISSUE OF WHETHER ISRAEL WILL ULTIMATELY WITHDRAW, IN THE CONTEXT OF PEACE COMMITMENTS, SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AND AGREED BORDERS, AND ALLOW THE PALESTINIANS A REAL VOICE IN DETERMINING THEIR OWN FUTURE.

PRESIDENT MADE CLEAR THAT WHILE DISCUSSIONS COULD BE STARTED FROM THE BEGIN SELF-RULE PLAN, WE DO NOT CONSIDER THE PLAN, AS IT NOW STANDS, TO OFFER ADEQUATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. THE PRESIDENT PUT FORWARD A NUMBER OF EXPLORATORY THOUGHTS ON HOW TO BRIDGE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PARTIES REGARDING WEST BANK AND GAZA ISSUES AND ALSO REGARDING SINAI. HOWEVER, WE DID NOT, AS SOME PRESS REPORTS ALLEGE, PUT

FORWARD A FORMAL U.S. PROPOSAL FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

6. THE PRESIDENT REITERATED THE U.S. POSITION REGARDING ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. IN A SECRET

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SEPARATE MEETING, FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN TOLD SECRETARY VANCE THAT THERE WILL BE NO NEW SETTLEMENTS IN SINAI WHILE NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNDERWAY AND THAT EACH NEW SETTLEMENT IN THE WEST BANK WILL REQUIRE SPECIFIC CABINET APPROVAL. THE SECRETARY EMPHASIZED THAT WE WOULD VIEW ANY NEW SETTLEMENTS WITH THE UTMOST SERIOUSNESS.

7. WE BELIEVE THESE MEETING WENT FARTHER THAN HAS EVER BEEN POSSIBLE BEFORE TOWARD ENGAGING THE ISRAELIS ON THE REAL ISSUES, AND THAT WE ACCOMPLISHED MOST OF WHAT WE THOUGHT COULD BE ACHIEVED IN THIS SESSION. WHAT IS NEEDED NOW IS TIME FOR THE EFFECTS OF THIS VISIT TO BE DIGESTED IN ISRAEL, FOR BEGIN AND HIS COLLEAGUES TO RETHINK AMONG THEMSELVES THE DIFFICULT DECISIONS AHEAD AND FOR THEM TO WORK THESE DECISIONS THROUGH THE ISRAELI POLITICAL PROCESS. WE ARE SEEING NOW, AS A RESULT OF THE PRESIDENT'S MEETINGS WITH BEGIN, THE SIGNS IN ISRAEL OF A PROFOUND REAPPRAISAL. CLEAR PRESENTATION TO ISRAEL OF THE U.S. POSITION ON THE KEY ISSUES DURING THE VISIT SHOULD MAKE IT OBVIOUS TO THE ISRAELIS THAT THE U.S. IS DETERMINED TO MOVE THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD. IT IS ESSENTIAL NOW, AS DEBATE INTENSIFIES IN ISRAEL, THAT ALL CONCERNED DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HOLD OUT TO THOSE ISRAELIS LOOKING FOR SERIOUS COMPROMISE THE PROSPECT OF REALISTIC PROGRESS ON GROUNDS THAT PROMISE SECURITY FOR ISRAEL. IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT, IN THIS RESPECT, THAT ALL CONCERNED ON THE ARAB SIDE AVOID STATEMENTS OR ACTIONS THAT MIGHT BE UNHELPFUL.

8. WE DID NOT WANT THIS MEETING TO BE DIVERTED FROM THE CENTRAL ISSUE OF PEACE, AND THEREFORE SOUTHERN SECRET

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LEBANON WAS DISCUSSED ONLY BRIEFLY. THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY AGREED TO COMPLY WITH UN RESOLUTIONS 425 AND 426 AND HAD DECLARED A UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE. PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AND FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN ASSURED US THAT ISRAEL WILL WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON. WE BELIEVE THAT THE SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT OF A UN FORCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WILL ITSELF SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVE THE CLIMATE FOR PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ALL GOVERNMENTS HAVING INFLUENCE WITH THE PLO USE THAT INFLUENCE TO PRESS THE PLO TO COOPERATE WITH THE CEASEFIRE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF

LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY THROUGHOUT SOUTH LEBANON. FOR OUR PART, WE ARE URGING ISRAEL TO PRESS FOR THE SAME KIND OF COOPERATION FROM THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS UNDER ITS INFLUENCE IN THE SOUTH.

9. IT WILL HAVE BEEN NOTED THAT THERE WAS NO PRESS STATEMENT AT THE END OF THE VISIT. WE WERE UNWILLING TO MAKE AN ANODYNE STATEMENT AND CHOSE TO MAKE THE PUBLIC AWARE OF OUR POSITIONS IN OTHER WAYS, NOTABLY THROUGH PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AT THE END OF THE SECOND DAY'S MEETING. FYI: YOU SHOULD POINT OUT THAT MARCH 23 WASHINGTON POST CARRIES FOUR-COLUMN HEADLINES ABOUT "GRIM TALKS" AND "SHARP CONFLICT ON THE ISSUES" AND FEATURED PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT THAT PEACE STILL SEEMS FAR AWAY. ATHERTON DID BACKGROUNDER IMMEDIATELY AFTER CONCLUSION OF MEETINGS, SENT SEPTEL, WHICH CLEARLY STATED THE U.S. POSITION. THE PRESIDENT MET THE SAME DAY WITH THE HIRC AND AT BREAKFAST THURSDAY MORNING WITH THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE. THE SECRETARY ALSO ADDRESSED THESE ISSUES IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE FRIDAY. END FYI. WE BELIEVE THERE IS INCREASINGLY CLEAR PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF WHERE THINGS NOW STAND AND SUPPORT FOR THE ADMINISTRATION.

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10. IN SUM, AS RESULT OF PRESIDENT'S MEETINGS WITH BEGIN, THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ISRAEL'S AND OUR VIEWS ON MAJOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE ISSUES WERE CLEARLY DEFINED AND THOROUGHLY DISCUSSED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL. WE BELIEVE ISRAEL WILL NEED PERIOD AHEAD TO SORT OUT THEIR RESPONSE TO THE POSITIONS WE HAVE TAKEN. AS

TO NEXT STEPS, WE BELIEVE AN IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE REMAINS ACHIEVING AGREEMENT ON A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES WHICH WILL CONSTITUTE THE FRAMEWORK FOR A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST PEACE AND FACILITATE BOTH A RENEWAL AND A BROADENING OF DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS. WE PLAN TO BE IN TOUCH SHORTLY WITH ISRAELIS AND EGYPTIANS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES AND WILL DETERMINE IN THESE CONSULTATIONS HOW SPECIFICALLY TO PROCEED.

11. YOU SHOULD POINT OUT THAT FOREGOING IS VERY FULL RUNDOWN. PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY WANTED HUSSEIN AND SAUDI LEADERSHIP TO HAVE COMPLETE AND ACCURATE PICTURE OF WHERE THINGS STAND, AND THEY PARTICULARLY WANT THEM TO KNOW THAT USG IS DETERMINED TO PERSEVERE AND TO SUCCEED IN THIS EFFORT. OBVIOUSLY WE ARE COUNTING HEAVILY ON HELP THAT JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA CAN GIVE US AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME, FOR WE BELIEVE OUR SUCCESS IS AS

IMPORTANT TO OUR LONG-TIME AND CLOSE ARAB FRIENDS AS TO OURSELVES. WE ARE SURE HUSEIN AND SAUDIS SHARE THIS VIEW. WE WILL BE IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THEM AS WE PLAN OUR NEXT MOVES. VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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